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Evaluation

Annual report on evaluation in UNDP 2009

Summary

The 2009 annual report on evaluation assesses the progress made by the Evaluation Office and the Evaluation Units of the associated funds and programmes in fulfilling the evaluation function outlined in the UNDP Evaluation Policy. The report presents an assessment of the evaluation capacity in the organization, evaluative evidence available for managing development results, and compliance in decentralized evaluation. The lessons emerging from independent evaluations are discussed, and the report presents the programme of work for 2010-2011.

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board may wish to: (a) take note of the report; (b) request UNDP to address the issues raised by independent evaluations; (c) request UNDP to strengthen decentralized evaluation capacity and increase its use; (d) request UNDP to support national evaluation capacity development; and (e) approve the programme of work proposed by the Evaluation Office.

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Background

1. The 2009 annual report on evaluation is the fourth report submitted by the Evaluation Office of UNDP to the Executive Board since the Evaluation Policy was approved in 2006. The report assesses the progress made by the Evaluation Office and the Evaluation Units of the associated funds and programmes in fulfilling the evaluation function outlined in the UNDP Evaluation Policy. It also presents an assessment of the evaluation capacity in the organization, evaluative evidence available for managing development results, and compliance in decentralized evaluation. The lessons emerging from independent evaluations are discussed, and the programme of work for 2010-2011 is presented (see sect. III).

2. In the past year the Evaluation Office and the Evaluation Units of the associated funds and programmes have made significant efforts to enhance the quality of the independent evaluations and contribute to organizational learning through increased evaluation coverage. There were important initiatives by the Evaluation Office to support evaluation capacity development at the decentralized level (at the country office level); to further national evaluation capacity development; and to participate and lead the initiatives of United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). The Evaluation Office supported the independent review of the UNDP Evaluation Policy. The review will inform the revision of the Evaluation Policy and the future work of the Evaluation Office.

I. The evaluation function

A. UNDP Evaluation Office

Coverage

3. The Evaluation Office conducts independent evaluations of corporate and global, regional and country programme outcomes identified in the UNDP strategic plan, and approved by the Executive Board. In 2009-2010 :he Evaluation Office significantly expanded its programme of work to inform UNDP programme and management decisions. The number of assessments of development results (ADRs) conducted increased from 4 in 2007 to 14 in 2009. During the reporting period, the ADRs were conducted in Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Georgia, Guyana, Indonesia, the Libyan Arab Jamahir;ya, Peru, Maldives, Seychelles, Turkey, Uganda and Zambia, covering all regions of the UNDP programme. The Evaluation Office also evaluated the regional cooperation framework for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as the evaluation of the cooperation agreement between UNDP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, jointly with the Evaluation Office of UNIDO.

Review of the Evaluation Policy

4. In its decision 2006/20, the Executive Board approved the Evaluation Policy and requested that an independent review be conducted after three years of implementation of the policy. In 2009 the Evaluation Office commissioned the review to an independent team. The review was quality assured by a panel of senior advisers. The scope of the review included an assessment of the operationalization of the Evaluation Policy, the establishment of an independent evaluation system throughout the organization and the way in which the Evaluation Office performed the evaluation function. The Evaluation Office has provided inputs to the UNDP management response to be presented formally to the Executive Board together with the review at the 2010 annual session.

Support to building a culture of evaluation in UNDP

5. During 2009, the Evaluation Office continued to participate in activities and discussions aimed at strengthening the evaluation culture in UNDP and, in particular, the conduct, quality and use of decentralized evaluations. An important highlight was the revision of the Evaluation Office *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Results*, which had served as a guide to UNDP programme units since 2002. In order to emphasize integrating evaluation in the context of results-based management, the Evaluation Office in partnership with the Operations Support Group and the Capacity

Development Group of the Bureau for Development Policy, prepared a revised handbook. That document was developed in close coordination with programme units, including country offices. A few country offices were invited to participate in a workshop on a pre-final draft of the new *Handbook* aimed at ensuring its appropriateness and user-friendliness. The *Handbook* was launched by the Administrator on 14 September 2009.

6. The Evaluation Office participated in a series of training workshops to roll out the new *Handbook*, in order to strengthen the awareness of the programme units and the application of results-based management principles and tools. These workshops were conducted jointly with the Operations Support Group, the Capacity Development Group of the Bureau for Development Policy, the Bureau of Management, the Learning Resources Centre, and other relevant units. Training workshops were conducted for the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, both at headquarters and in Bangkok, the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean at headquarters, for the Regional Bureau for Africa in Dakar, and in Beirut for the Regional Bureau for Arab States. A similar workshop is planned for 2010 for the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

7. The Evaluation Office has continued to deliver regular evaluation training modules for programme policy and operations courses for Junior Professional Officers, national programme officers and Leadership Development Programme candidates, organized by the Learning Resources Centre.

8. The Evaluation Office manages the online Evaluation Resources Centre. In 2009, the system was updated to be more user-friendly, in particular, with regard to the management response tracking system. The system includes evaluations conducted by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. During the reporting period, the Evaluation Resources Centre repository contained 1,347 evaluation reports.[1]

9. The e-knowledge evaluation network of UNDP, EvalNet, has been operational since 2001. The network has a membership of 1,311, including 236 new members who joined in 2009. The EvalNet discussions were on UNDP engagement in the evaluation of public policies and national development plans; setting up monitoring and evaluation units within the country office; creating projects in ATLAS; preparation of the knowledge products; and the use of the monitoring and evaluation function as a dynamic learning tool. Bi-annual resource packages were prepared on evaluation and training events and evaluation news.

Resources

10. The Evaluation Office received a biennial budget of $17.6 million for 2008-2009, of which $9.03 million was allocated for 2009. The non-core budget for the year includes $0.7 million from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and $91,600 from the Global Environment Facility. The staff cost was $3.9 million, while the allocation for evaluations was $5.1 million. There has been a 12.4 per cent increase in the allocation for evaluations compared with the previous year. The expenditure for 2009 was $5.2 million. The Evaluation Office had 23 staff members (16 Professional and 7 General Service), which is the same as the previous year. Women comprise 50 per cent of the total number of staff members, which includes 37 per cent among the Professional staff.

11. During 2009 the evaluation office hired the services of 76 consultants (23 as team leaders and 53 as team specialists and national consultants). Thirty-three (43 per cent) of the consultants hired were women and women comprised 19 per cent of the team leaders. While there has been an increase in the number of women as team leaders, the participation of suitable female consultants for the position of team leader remains a challenge. Sixty-four per cent of the consultants were from the donor countries, and the remainder from programme countries.

12. The Evaluation Office made specific efforts to increase the use of national and regional consultants. The ADR in China was conducted with an independent national institute and the evaluation teams in Chile, Peru Uganda and Zambia were comprised largely of national consultants. All ADR teams included

[1] See http://erc.undp.org

at least 1 national consultant and 7 out of 15 ADRs used regional consultants. The Evaluation Office will be using national expertise to fuller potential in the assessments to be conducted in 2010.

Quality

13. The Evaluation Office standardized the methodology for conducting ADRs. Methodology manuals and process management guidelines were finalized for assessing contributions to development results. The systematization of the methodology and process increased the quality of the evaluation findings, and enhanced consolidation of lessons from the evaluations at the global level. The improved evidence from ADRs conducted in about 15 countries form a strong bases for meta-evaluation in the result areas mandated by the Executive Board for UNDP.

14. The Evaluation Office is cognizant of the efforts of other multilateral agencies to increase analytic rigour and refine performance measurement through the use of evaluation rating scales. Given the nature of the UNDP country support framework, the Evaluation Office has in the past chosen not to utilize ratings scales, as they can be construed as creating performance comparisons between country offices and by extension between partner countries. In 2010, the Evaluation Office is revisiting this issue of ratings in a limited way, in two ADRs. A rating scale will be devised and used in each ADR to help gauge country office performance against a limited set of objectives and planned outcomes within the country programme.

15. Initiatives were taken to address the challenges in assessing the contribution to results in the programme areas of UNDP at the global and thematic levels. The Evaluation Office organized an inter-agency workshop to discuss the methodology manual and process guidelines for thematic evaluation. Evaluation professionals from multilateral agencies, including United Nations agencies, attended the workshop. The thematic method manual and the process guidelines that were subsequently finalized benefited from this broad consultation.

16. Internal and external quality enhancement mechanisms have been institutionalized by the Evaluation Office. The key evaluation outputs of the ADRs are reviewed by Evaluation Office staff and external reviewers. An advisory panel comprising three external evaluation and subject experts is constituted to review the terms of reference, inception report, and draft reports of thematic evaluations. In 2009, 34 development and evaluation professionals provided external reviews for the various evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office.

17. The evaluations conducted in 2009 were timely in their completion and feeding into the preparation of the country programming. The Board's discussion of the new programme is informed by the independent evaluations. Consultations with the regional bureaux facilitated short listing countries for conducting ADRs where new country programmes will be reviewed. The Evaluation Office also responded to the requests of the regional bureaux to conduct ADRs in specific countries and at times to expedite the process to keep up with the time schedule of the submission of the new programme to the Executive Board.

Involving national stakeholders

18. In the past year, there has been greater emphasis on collaborating with national Governments and in drawing on national professional expertise while conducting ADRs, and using the nation's expertise to its potential. The Evaluation Office organized a workshop to examine various dimensions of engaging with the national Government in countries where ADRs are carried out. Issues pertaining to participation of the government counterparts at the national level, the modality to be followed, and upholding the independence of the evaluation were addressed. In the ADRs to be conducted in 2010, the Evaluation Office will maximize collaboration with national Governments through a variety of modalities.

19. The Evaluation Office takes measures to ensure stakeholder participation during the conduct of evaluations at the national level. Stakeholders participate in the finalization of terms of reference, provide their perceptions on UNDP support, and engage in the discussions of the draft findings, conclusions and recommendations. In the past year, the participation of the stakeholders has been good in ADRs.

20. The regional bureaux participated in discussions of the draft report and stakeholder workshop in the countries. The participation of the bureaux, particularly participation of the senior management, contributed to the accountability, learning, and follow-up by UNDP.

Strengthening national evaluation capacities

21. Successive General Assembly resolutions and UNDP Executive Board decisions have encouraged the United Nations development system and UNDP in particular to support the national evaluation capacity in developing countries. Taking this agenda forward, the UNDP Evaluation Office in cooperation with the Moroccan National Observatory for Human Development organized the International Conference on National Evaluation Capacity, held in Casablanca, Morocco, from 15 to 17 December 2009. The purpose of the conference was to provide a forum for discussion on issues confronting countries on evaluation and to enable participants to draw on recent and innovative experiences of other countries. About 65 participants attended the conference, including senior government officials in charge of or associated with national evaluation systems from 20 developing countries, evaluation experts, and staff from evaluation offices of United Nations organizations, the multilateral development banks and bilateral aid agencies.

22. The lessons that emerged from the discussions at the conference, on the experience across different countries on why and how evaluation systems emerged, their legal framework and institutional set-up are extremely useful to inform efforts to strengthen national evaluation capacities. While many participants acknowledged that the demand for evaluation often originated from international partners, it was recognized that the national political process and constitutional mandate are key factors that shaped national evaluation systems. The deliberations at the conference identified challenges in establishing the operational linkages between planning, monitoring and evaluation. While there has been progress on monitoring the implementation of development programmes and policies, the nature of evaluations and linking lessons from evaluations to planning was found to be weak. It was pointed out that independent evaluations are important for adequately ascertaining the rationale and assumptions of public policies and whether the policy design was right or not. The agency conducting the independent evaluations and having oversight authority varied across countries. Concerns were expressed about potential conflict of interest and a need to strengthen independence of evaluations for accountability purposes.

23. Participants recognized the need for sound technical capacity and adequate funding in order to conduct evaluations. The discussions pointed to the fact that the assessment of the needs and evaluation capacities of the Government should take into consideration capacities required for managing, conducting and using evaluations. There was consensus among the participants that evaluation of public policy is embedded in the political process and adequate attention to political process should be paid along with efforts to strengthen technical capacities. Governments need to play a lead role in evaluations, as it is one of their instruments for promoting more effective public policies and transparency. It was agreed that countries should build their own evaluation standards, linked to existing international standards and principles, particularly in consultation with all actors, including civil society and other political parties, and rooting them in the national context.

24. The conference was successful in promoting an understanding of international standards in evaluation, and advocated for evaluation to contribute to better management for development results and improving public accountability and learning. It also prepared the ground for the formulation of cooperative initiatives to strengthen national capacities for public policy evaluation through South-South or triangular cooperation. A conference website has been set up and will be developed into a web-based portal on national evaluation capacity. Following the Morocco conference, South Africa expressed its willingness to host the next conference in 2011, and the Evaluation Office will support the organizing of the conference.

B. United Nations Evaluation Group[2]

25. The Evaluation Office continued its strong support to the rigorous agenda of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), including advancing United Nations system-wide coherence, quality and innovation in evaluation. At the UNEG annual general meeting in March 2009, the Director of the UNDP Evaluation Office was re-elected Chair of UNEG. UNDP hosts the UNEG secretariat, managed by the Deputy Director of the Evaluation Office, in his/her capacity as UNEG Executive Coordinator. This institutional arrangement was also reconfirmed at the annual general meeting in 2009.

26. The UNEG work programme for 2009 was implemented by seven task forces, in which the Evaluation Office participated actively. The Evaluation Office was the co-Chair for the task forces on country-level evaluation and training. The country-level evaluation task force conducted a stocktaking exercise of current monitoring and evaluation practices at the country level and the training task force continued to develop the UNEG training course for use by United Nations staff. The Evaluation Office staff members participated in initiatives to develop a guidance document on impact evaluations, a handbook for evaluation in the United Nations system to integrate human rights and gender equality perspectives in the management and conduct of evaluations, conduct a review of existing frameworks and tools for assessing evaluation functions in the United Nations system, and develop standards and good practices for all stages of the evaluation process. UNEG initiatives are integrated in the office plan of work and individual performance plans of staff members of the Evaluation Office.

27. The UNEG participated in the August intergovernmental meeting of the eight Delivering as One programme country pilots in October 2009. As follow-up to the evaluability studies conducted the previous year, UNEG presented a framework terms of reference for country-led evaluations by the programme country pilots, which has been adapted by each country to their specific context. The UNEG is currently providing quality assurance advice to the ongoing country-led evaluations.

28. The UNEG also published the *Joint Evaluation of the Role and Contribution of the United Nations System in the Republic of South Africa*. The evaluation was a joint initiative between the Government of South Africa and the UNEG. UNDP served as co-Chair of the UNEG task force that coordinated the evaluation. In evaluating the role and contribution of the United Nations system in South Africa, the report assessed the effectiveness and contribution of the United Nations system to long-term development in South Africa and also provided lessons to guide future nationally led evaluations. It will serve as a model for United Nations collaboration with national institutions to share the responsibility for evaluation.

C. Associated funds and programmes

United Nations Capital Development Fund

29. UNCDF has a separate and distinct Evaluation Unit, which reports directly to the Executive Secretary, thereby ensuring the independence and priority of the evaluation function. In the past decade, significant efforts have been made to further the evaluation culture within UNCDF, supporting both accountability and learning. The programme evaluations continue to be a key corporate priority for UNCDF. For the year 2009, UNCDF allocated $277,500.00 for programme and project evaluations.

30. UNCDF has taken measures to ensure full compliance with the evaluation plans and Evaluation Policy and to enhance the quality and utility of evaluations. To enable this, a Special Project Implementation Review Exercise was formulated in 2009. The exercise is expected to inform the UNCDF evaluation policy in relation to accountability requirements, knowledge management potential, and results-based management arrangements as well as the role of evaluation in measuring the capacity of UNCDF to leverage its funds and influence policy.

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[2] UNEG is a professional network responsible for evaluation in the United Nations system.

[3] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.XX.8.

31. The Special Projects Implementation Review Exercise is an outsourced arrangement for conducting mid-term and final evaluations (or equivalent assessments), and is intended to yield credible, effective, independent evaluations in a cost- and time-efficient manner. It is designed to produce high-quality evaluations that inform UNCDF programming and are also of value to development stakeholders and decision makers. Implementation of phase 1 of the exercise has commenced and the scope includes eight project evaluations to begin in January 2010 and conclude in December of the same year.

32. Clear procedures have been formulated by UNCDF for the preparation and internal clearance of management responses to evaluations. The Evaluation Unit is tracking compliance and the Evaluation Resources Centre is being updated on a half-yearly basis. This is in compliance with the mandatory requirement of management responses.

33. In 2009 the UNCDF Evaluation Unit carried out two evaluations in partnership with UNDP. They were project evaluations in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Governance and Public Administration Reform: Support for Better Service Delivery, District Development Fund component) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Support to the microfinance sector).

34. As an active member of UNEG, UNCDF contributes to the development of evaluation policy and practice.

United Nations Development Fund for Women

35. The Evaluation Unit of UNIFEM conducts two types of evaluations: corporate evaluations managed by the Evaluation Unit and decentralized evaluations managed by all other UNIFEM offices including sections at headquarters and the field. In 2009 the Evaluation Unit conducted four corporate evaluations.

36. The UNIFEM Evaluation Unit had eight staff members, including three new regional evaluation specialists for Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, respectively, and an additional evaluation specialist based at headquarters. The budget for the year 2009 was $1,687,833, which includes a core fund of $725,000 and non-core of $962,833, the latter to be implemented on a bi-annual basis.

37. In response to commitments within the UNIFEM Strategic Plan (2008-2013) and the Evaluation Strategy (2008-2011), and complying with the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, in December 2009 the UNIFEM Executive Director approved the UNIFEM Evaluation Policy. Under the umbrella of the UNDP Evaluation Policy, UNIFEM policy emphasizes key evaluation standards, namely, participation and inclusiveness, focus on utilization, and intentionality, management, independence and impartiality, quality and credibility, and ethical issues. The Evaluation Unit also prepared a set of guidelines to support the UNIFEM programme and evaluation staff to manage evaluations.

38. At the decentralized level, the challenges in UNIFEM evaluation practice were largely related to issues of evaluation methodology, organizational culture and capacities, and participation of stakeholders in the evaluation process. The dissemination and utilization of evaluations results in decentralized evaluations remain a concern. During 2009 there were limitations in completion of decentralized evaluations that were planned. Of the 34 decentralized evaluations planned by subregional offices, 11 evaluations were completed.

39. The UNIFEM Evaluation Unit in collaboration with Carleton University (Canada) designed and conducted an evaluation capacity-building programme for UNIFEM programme managers and partners in West Asia, Asia and the Pacific, Arab States, Africa, and Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The programme attended by 137 UNIFEM staff and 26 partners (government representatives, NGOs, donors and United Nations agencies) aimed to build skills to plan, manage and use evaluations from a gender equality and human rights perspective.

40. Significant steps were taken in 2009 to strengthen the evaluation function, including management responses to evaluation. The UNIFEM Evaluation Policy states that all independent evaluations of UNIFEM should develop a management response within six weeks of their finalization. The policy also defines responsibilities of senior management in overseeing the completion of management responses

and their follow-up. UNIFEM and UNDP agreed to develop a module for UNIFEM in the Evaluation Resources Centre in 2010.

41. UNIFEM initiated a dialogue with regional evaluation networks, the African Gender Development Evaluation Network, and the International Programme Evaluation Network in the Commonwealth of Independent States, to build capacity on gender- and human-rights-responsive evaluations. The UNIFEM Evaluation Unit actively participated in different UNEG task forces, co-chairing the gender equality and human rights task force and the evaluation practice exchange task force. UNIFEM contributed to developing the evaluation handbook on gender and human rights, which will be piloted in United Nations evaluations in 2010.

United Nations Volunteers programme

42. For the year 2009 the UNV programme Evaluation Unit had a budget of $497,168. A large component of the budget, 89 per cent, was allocated for conducting evaluations, 8 per cent for activities aimed at enhancing learning from evaluations, and 3 per cent for corporate reporting activities. The main source of funding was the UNV Special Voluntary Fund, and the project evaluations were funded from project budgets, which may or may not be sourced by the Fund. During 2009 the UNV Evaluation Unit had four staff members.

43. In 2009, the Evaluation Unit provided technical support and quality assurance to two decentralized project evaluations. High turnover of staff in the field and the organizational restructuring process at UNV has resulted in delays in completing evaluations. Five project evaluations that started in 2009 will be concluded only in 2010.

44. The Evaluation Unit supported corporate reviews of the national UNV volunteer modality and UNV research and development function conducted by the Research and Development Unit. It also carried out a review of the UNV evaluation function. The review indicated a need for a more focused evaluation function. As part of the UNV organizational change process, measures are being taken to ensure that the focus of the Evaluation Unit remains on conducting and managing evaluations and organizational learning.

45. The Evaluation Unit developed a planning, monitoring and evaluation training course for UNV programme staff, building on the UNSSC United Nations System Staff College course and the new UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Results. Two UNV training sessions were organized in 2009, in which 60 UNV headquarters staff participated.

46. In 2009 the Evaluation Unit continued to facilitate the management response system introduced in 2008. The Evaluation Unit developed a set of guidelines and a template for the preparation of management responses. Management response has also been incorporated into UNV standard evaluation terms of reference and forthcoming UNV planning, monitoring and evaluation training.

47. The Evaluation Unit revised the handbook entitled "Methodology to Assess the Contribution of Volunteerism to Development", which is being disseminated. The Evaluation Unit also provided technical support to the development of methodology to assess the contribution of volunteering to community-based adaptation to climate change led by the UNV Research and Development Unit. A handbook was prepared to identify entry points for mainstreaming volunteerism into the monitoring and evaluation processes of the UNDP/GEF community-based adaptation programme.

48. The UNV participated in the UNEG task force to develop a handbook on evaluation from the human rights and gender equality perspective.

C. Programme units

Coverage

49. The Evaluation Policy mandates that country offices prepare an evaluation plan along with the country programme for the programme period. The decentralized evaluations are funded through the programme budget and the evaluations are commissioned by the country office. The evaluations and the

management response prepared by the country office are made available in the Evaluation Resources Centre.

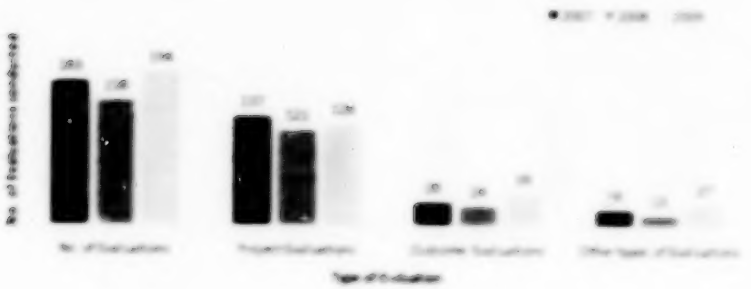
50. The country offices conducted 194 evaluations during 2009, comprising projects, programme outcomes, thematic outcome, and UNDAF evaluations. Table 1 presents the evaluation profile of the country offices in 2009. The percentage of evaluations conducted was high in Asia and the Pacific, followed by Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Across the regions, project evaluations were predominant. While there has been an increase in the number of evaluations in the last two years (see figure 1), the average number of evaluations was not proportionate with the number of countries or programme portfolios. The thematic distribution of the evaluations indicates that the largest number of evaluations were in the area of poverty reduction and governance, followed by crisis prevention and recovery (see figure 2).

Table 1. Evaluation in UNDP country offices in 2009[a]

	Regional distribution of evaluations					
Region and number of countries	Africa 46	Arab States 18	Asia and the Pacific 25	Europe and the CIS 29	Latin America and the Caribbean 24	Total 142
Number of evaluations[a]	67 (34%)[b]	27 (13%)[b]	54 (28%)[b]	19 (10%)[b]	28 (14%)[b]	194 (100%)[b]
Project evaluations[c]	26 (39%)[b]	13 (48%)[b]	37 (69%)[b]	12 (63%)[b]	30 (79%)[b]	128 (66%)[b]
Outcome evaluations[c]	34 (51%)[b]	6 (22%)[b]	9 (17%)[b]	9 (47%)[b]	9 (32%)[b]	38 (20%)[b]
Other evaluations[c]	7 (10%)[b]	8 (30%)[b]	12 (22%)[b]	2 (11%)[b]	1 (3%)[b]	27 (14%)[b]
Countries with at least one evaluation[c]	37 (80%)[b]	11 (61%)[b]	20 (80%)[b]	15 (52%)[b]	15 (63%)[b]	78 (56%)[b]

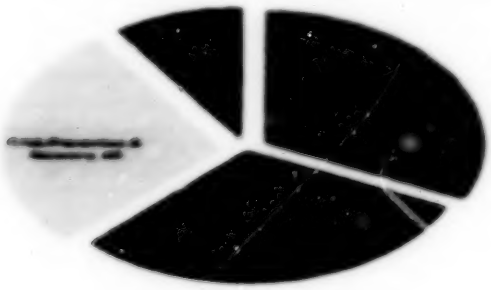
[a] Percentages calculated based on total number of evaluations in the row.
[b] Percentages calculated based on total number of evaluations in the region in the column.
[c] Percentages calculated based on total number of countries.
[a] The evaluations presented are based on the Evaluation Resources Centre data as at 4 March 2010.

Figure 1. Evaluation in UNDP country offices (2007-2009)



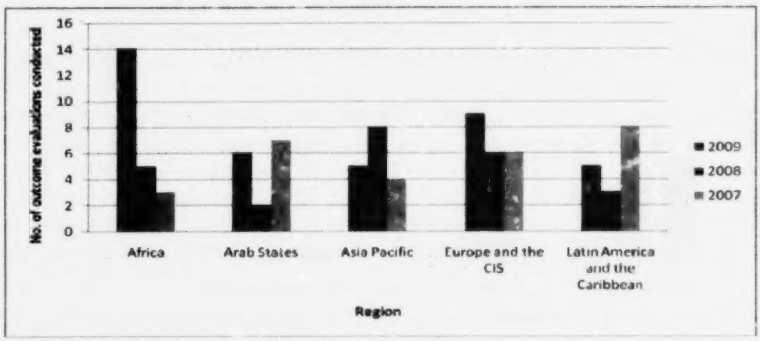
91. The number of outcome evaluations in 2009 continues to be low and there has been no significant increase in the number of outcome evaluations in the past three years (see figure 1). While there has been a significant increase in the number of outcome evaluations in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States since 2007, the trend has been uneven in other regions (see figure 3). There has been a decrease in the number of outcome evaluations in the Asia and the Pacific and Africa regions, indicating a lack of adequate planning in conducting outcome evaluations. In 120 country offices, no outcome evaluations were conducted. Donor requirements were attributed for conducting more project evaluations compared to outcome evaluations. A review of select evaluation plans indicates that some country offices are finding it difficult to satisfy both donor requirements and UNDP outcome management expectations. Strategic planning was not done in the conduct of the evaluation that serves both donor requirements and outcome management.

Figure 2. Thematic distribution of outcome evaluations



92. The country offices also conducted United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) evaluations, thematic evaluations and technical assessments (categorized as "other evaluations"). There has been an increase in the number of UNDAF evaluations in the past three years from one in 2007 to seven in 2009, although the total number of UNDAF evaluations is not commensurate with the countries preparing new UNDAF and country programmes. In 2009, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery conducted an evaluation of its disaster risk reduction programme. The Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States conducted an outcome evaluation in 2009.

Figure 3. Outcome evaluations across regions (2007-2009)



Compliance

53. The Evaluation Policy stipulates that the country programmes plan outcome evaluations during the programme period. Of the 18 country programmes which concluded in 2009, 5 did not carry out or plan for any outcome evaluations. Of the remaining 13 country programmes which planned for outcome evaluations, only 1 was fully compliant (see table 2). The experience in the countries where ADRs are conducted indicates that compliance with outcome evaluation requirements and the timing remains an issue. There are indications that outcome evaluation compliance was often to fulfil audit requirements rather than informing programme planning. The low prevalence of outcome evaluations and poor timing also affected the conduct of ADRs.

Table 2. Outcome evaluation compliance

Region	Number of countries subject to compliance	Compliant*	Partially compliant**	Non-compliant***
Africa	1	0	0	1
Asia and the Pacific	1	0	1	0
Europe and the CIS	10	1	5	4
Latin America and the Caribbean	1	0	1	0
Total	**13**	**1**	**7**	**5**

* Completed all planned outcome evaluations.
** Completed at least one, but not all, planned outcome evaluations.
*** Did not complete any planned outcome evaluations.

54. The Evaluation Resources Centre indicates that there has been an improvement in outcome evaluation planning in the past two years. The number of countries which did not plan an outcome evaluation was high for programmes that concluded in 2008 and 2009. The country programme cycles commencing in 2009 and 2010 included a minimum of two outcome evaluations per country office.

Quality

55. A quality assessment of outcome evaluations was conducted by the Evaluation Office. Twenty-five outcome evaluations conducted in 2009 were quality assessed using the set of criteria the Evaluation Office had developed. The findings of the quality assessment are presented in table 3. The percentage of

outcome evaluations that were found satisfactory and moderately satisfactory was about 60 per cent in 2009 and has increased since 2007, while there has been a decrease in the evaluations that are highly satisfactory (see figure 4 in the annex).

Table 3. Summary of outcome evaluation ratings by quality criteria[a]

Rating	Quality criteria							
	2009 overall	*Completeness and readability of the report*	*Clarity of evaluation purpose and subject*	*Evaluation objectives and criteria*	*Methods for data collection and analysis*	*Findings*	*Conclusions*	*Lessons and recommendations*
Highly satisfactory	2 (8%)	6 (24%)	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)
Satisfactory	8 (32%)	1 (4%)	4 (16%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	6 (24%)	5 (20%)	4 (16%)
Moderately satisfactory	6 (24%)	6 (24%)	12 (48%)	5 (20%)	5 (20%)	6 (24%)	2 (8%)	11 (44%)
Moderately unsatisfactory	7 (28%)	10 (40%)	4 (16%)	6 (24%)	3 (12%)	5 (20%)	10 (40%)	6 (24%)
Unsatisfactory	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	7 (28%)	11 (44%)	5 (20%)	4 (16%)	2 (8%)
Highly unsatisfactory	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)
Total	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)

[a]The outcome evaluations quality assessed is presented in the annex (see Executive Board website).

56. Analysis of ratings for each criterion suggests that the evaluation reports are strongest when it comes to "Clarity of purpose and subject", followed by "Completeness and readability" (figure 5 in the annex). The "Methods for data collection and analysis" criterion was the weakest in the evaluations assessed. The rest of the criteria (findings, conclusions and recommendations) are for the most part evenly distributed. It was found that the conclusions and recommendations were often poorly formulated.

57. The assessment also indicates that better terms of reference regarding methodology and criteria contributed to improved clarity of the evaluations. Weak evaluation design and methodology were reported in the assessments conducted in 2007 and 2008 as well. Strengthening capacity to design and manage evaluations needs more attention and the regional offices have an important role in enhancing the evaluation capacities at the country office.

E. Evaluation capacity

58. Table 4 outlines the monitoring and evaluation capacity of the country offices in 2009. There have been efforts by the country offices to improve their monitoring and evaluation capacity. There was an increase both in the number of dedicated monitoring and evaluation staff from 45 in 2008 to 52 in 2009, as well as the monitoring and evaluation units from 31 in 2008 to 44 in 2009.

59. The countries in Africa have shown a significant increase in the monitoring and evaluation capacity from 13 monitoring and evaluation staff in 2008 to 21 in 2009. A similar increase was seen in the number of monitoring and evaluation units from 8 in 2008 to 21 in 2009. While there has been a marginal increase in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean since last year, there was a marginal decrease in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and Asia and the Pacific. There has been no change in the past two years in the monitoring and evaluation capacity in the Arab States.

60. Despite the increase in the number of monitoring and evaluation staff and units over the years, the number of country offices without monitoring and evaluation staff capacities continues to be high across the regions (see table 4). Eighty-three country offices do not have dedicated staff for monitoring and evaluation support.

Table 4. Evaluation capacity in country offices in 2009

Region	Global	Africa	Arab States	Asia and the Pacific	Europe and the CIS	Latin America and the Caribbean
Number of countries	141	45	18	25	29	24
Number of dedicated monitoring and evaluation specialists	52 (37%)	21 (46%)	6 (33%)	12 (48%)	1 (3.4%)	13 (54%)
Number of monitoring and evaluation units	44 (31%)	21 (46%)	2 11%)	10 (36%)	0 (0%)	11 (46%)

61. There were country offices where monitoring and evaluation functions were performed by units with a similar mandate. For example, the Programme Results and Resources Oversight Unit in Bangladesh, the Management Support Unit in Bhutan, and the Policy and Management Support Unit in the Lao People's Democratic Republic fulfilled monitoring and evaluation functions. In the Arab Region as well as in Asia and the Pacific, senior programme or management staff performed the additional responsibility of the monitoring and evaluation function. In Uganda, besides a dedicated monitoring and evaluation staff, each programme unit had programme staff members who were assigned the monitoring and evaluation function and devoted part of their time for such activities.

62. The evaluation capacities in the regional bureaux are not commensurate with the requirements of the country offices. The Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and the Bureau for Development Policy have evaluation specialists. The Bureau for Africa has an adviser at headquarters and two regional advisers in Johannesburg and Dakar; the Regional Bureau for the Arab States has a regional adviser in Cairo; and Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean has a regional adviser in Panama. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States are yet to have dedicated staff for monitoring and evaluation support.

63. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, while acknowledging the need for monitoring and evaluation, has not been able to field an adviser at the regional level because of resource constraints. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific management has committed to augmenting such capacity in conjunction with the ongoing restructuring of the regional centres. Priority is being given to recruiting an evaluation adviser at the Regional Centre in Bangkok.

Support to national monitoring and evaluation capacity

64. Several country offices provide support to strengthening the monitoring and evaluation capacities of the Government. In Bhutan UNDP, along with other United Nations agencies provides assistance to the Planning Commission for national development planning and developing a monitoring and evaluation system. Assistance includes the capacity development of the Government in results-based planning and monitoring, and the operationalisation of the planning and monitoring system, a web-based national results-based management platform developed with UNDP support. United Nations agencies in Bhutan have adopted standard progress reports for performance reporting, and are currently exploring the possibility of including UNDAF outcomes into the planning and monitoring system. Similar support was

provided in the Lao People's Democratic Republic for results-based management. In Cambodia, Myanmar and Uganda, UNDP provides support to monitoring the Millennium Development Goals.

F. Use of evaluations and follow-up

65. The formal mechanism for ensuring follow-up to the decentralized and independent evaluation is the management response to the evaluations. The management response is to be made publicly available in the Evaluation Resources Centre, as is the tracking system for follow-up to the management response. For the independent evaluation, the management response is also presented to the Executive Board. There has been significant improvement in the management response since the "evaluation management response" was included as an indicator in the balance scorecard in 2008. In 2009, 146 evaluations out of 195 posted on the Evaluation Resources Centre have full management response, while 12 evaluations have partial management response and the remaining 37 did not have a management response.

66. The independent evaluations significantly informed the Board discussions on the strategy of the new country programme. The findings and recommendations of the ADRs were used by the Board while suggesting changes to the country programmes. In the evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office, measures are taken to ensure wider stakeholder participation through the evaluation process. This contributed to better evaluation use by a wide range of stakeholders. The independent evaluations also enhanced evaluative evidence in reporting to the Executive Board the progress made by UNDP in achieving the results outlined.

II. Key findings and lessons learned from independent evaluations

67. The section summarizes key findings and lessons drawn from the independent evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office during the year 2009. The evaluations used for this analysis include 14 ADRs, evaluation of the regional programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and evaluation of the cooperation agreement between UNDP and UNIDO. The ADRs were carried out in Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Georgia, Guyana, Indonesia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Maldives, Peru, Seychelles, Turkey, Uganda and Zambia, covering all regions of UNDP.

A. Strategic positioning for development results

68. The ADRs examine strategic positioning of UNDP in a given political, socio-economic and development context and assess whether UNDP has leveraged its corporate strengths and comparative advantages to effectively respond to national demands and contribute to development results. In China, UNDP has managed to shift support from a diverse conglomeration of projects to flagship programmes designed to inform and support policymaking and human development outcomes. UNDP China has also launched a series of advocacy activities to promote public awareness and influence public opinion on development issues, pursued partnerships with the private sector and promoted South-South cooperation and global exchanges. UNDP in Peru has begun to shift its positioning from being a service deliverer to a substantive partner of the Government. While accepting the challenge of reducing the financial size of the programme, UNDP Peru became more "selective" in terms of areas and initiatives of its engagement.

69. While some UNDP offices made important shifts, others faced limitations in adapting their programmes to the specific requirements of a country's developmental context, including net contributing countries (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Seychelles), middle-income countries (Seychelles, Turkey) and small island developing States (Maldives, Seychelles). The ADRs highlighted the need for UNDP to continue to reorient its programming towards higher-level policy change and strategic upstream work, and to be more proactive and systematic in engaging in and initiating policy debates. Some ADRs cautioned that upstream work should not be confined to producing reports and holding workshops that do not clearly contribute to the enhanced well-being of people and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals. To realize strategic shifts to upstream work, the capacity of UNDP country offices needs to be further strengthened with experts on substantive issues, and/or have good and frequent access to such expertise from the headquarters and regional centres. The evaluation of the regional programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States revealed a high level of satisfaction of users of the regional centre's advisory services although utilization varied considerably across country offices,

partly reflecting the choices they have in using internal or external consulting resources. In contrast, during the conduct of some ADRs, questions were raised about the relevance of expertise and generic knowledge that UNDP can provide from headquarters and regional centres, especially in countries where the Government is capable of directly obtaining high-level expertise from global sources.

B. Coherence and synergies in programming

70. The ADRs found that the contribution to results and programme efficiency could have been improved with a more holistic approach in programming and by fully exploiting the potential synergies among UNDP programme areas (Cambodia, Chile, Georgia, Indonesia, Seychelles and Uganda). For example, in Cambodia, the ADR found a very strong UNDP presence in local governance. However, other initiatives, such as sustainable livelihood projects and community-based environment management programmes, were not linked to the local governance initiative.

71. UNDP programmes largely followed a project-oriented approach and often failed to build strong linkages within and across practice areas. The ADR in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya revealed that overreliance on external funding is one of the key reasons for fragmentation and lack of synergies in programming, resulting in missed opportunities. Lack of a holistic approach was more evident in responding to crisis situations and programming related to sustainable environment, disaster risk reduction and poverty reduction (Indonesia, Maldives, Peru and Uganda). In post-conflict support, there was limited synergy with ongoing poverty reduction and governance efforts (Uganda). The ADRs in Maldives and Seychelles found that specific measures to integrate environment and climate change adaptation as a cross-cutting issue across programme interventions, particularly in poverty reduction and disaster management interventions, have not been optimal to yield results. Considering the challenges of environment sustainability and climate change adaptation, the ADRs pointed out the importance of a more integrated approach to reducing vulnerability to climate change-related disasters (Chile, Indonesia, Maldives, Peru and Uganda). Lack of synergies between projects within a practice area was particularly evident in the area of environment management in countries with GEF-funded projects, which were often substantively and operationally disconnected from the rest of the environment programme (Cambodia, Maldives and Seychelles).

72. In order to improve coherence and synergies in programming, the ADRs recommended, inter alia, that all potential synergies and complementarities among different practice areas be exploited to the fullest; that UNDP integrate environment and climate change adaptation as a cross-cutting issue in its programmes; and that UNDP develop a resource mobilization strategy to support programmes in critical areas.

C. Gender equality and empowerment of women

73. The programme documents of all the countries where ADRs were conducted emphasize commitment to furthering gender equality and empowerment of women. There were examples where UNDP contributed to strengthening government systems for mainstreaming gender-related issues in government programme and policy (Cambodia, Maldives, Turkey and Uganda). In Cambodia, UNDP along with other United Nations agencies, provided support to develop an institutional structure for mainstreaming gender in government departments and ministries. Gender mainstreaming plans were developed by respective ministries and some of these plans have also received budgetary support from the Ministry of Finance. UNDP efforts have been instrumental in promoting the concept of gender mainstreaming in Turkey; and projects focusing on women have contributed to increase women's participation in politics in Georgia.

74. While specific interventions aimed at women's empowerment were largely successful, gender equality as a cross-cutting programme theme could have received better attention. In China, UNDP has consistently underscored the importance of gender mainstreaming in its projects and combined poverty reduction with environment protection. Considering the important role of UNDP in furthering achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, sufficient efforts were seen as necessary in developing a strategy and action plan for mainstreaming gender-related development issues. The ADRs point out that there were limitations in allocation of adequate resources for working on gender mainstreaming issues (Burkina Faso, Guyana, Indonesia, Maldives, Peru, Uganda and Zambia). This

particularly was manifest in countries dealing with crisis situations (Guyana, Indonesia, Maldives and Uganda). Across the ADR countries, it was also found that measurable indicators to gauge progress towards gender equality would have yielded better results. ADRs also point out inadequacies in coordination: the UNDP contribution in furthering gender equality can be enhanced if UNDP works in coordination with other United Nations agencies, such as UNIFEM and UNICEF. It is recommended, for example in Cambodia, that the gender focal point in the Resident Coordinator's office ensure better coordination among United Nations agencies in supporting the Government in gender mainstreaming.

D. United Nations coordination

75. UNDP support to coordination efforts of United Nations organizations and through the Resident Coordinator's office was generally seen as effective. In Maldives, UNDP and its United Nations partners provided inter-agency support to the national Human Rights Commission, preparation of the MDG reports, and the report on youth. UNDP in Georgia was effective in enabling coordination at the programme level among United Nations agencies in some areas. While UNDP has facilitated joint planning through the UNDAF (the exception was in Seychelles and Uganda), it was found that there is considerable scope to optimize the expertise and resources of United Nations agencies in contributing to development results (Guyana, Maldives, Zambia and Uganda). The evaluations indicate that further efforts are needed to ensure UNDAF adequately captured the strategic approach of the United Nations system. It was recommended that UNDP take the initiative towards increased integration and collaboration within the United Nations country team.

E. Programme management

Results-based management

76. The uneven application of results-based management principles in programming, monitoring and evaluation is a common theme in most ADRs. The most frequent concerns included: lack of adequate documentation and financial information on programmes and projects; criteria and indicators; baseline for monitoring and reporting on performance; vague distinctions among outcomes, outputs and indicators; and poor formulation, testing and use of indicators in regular monitoring. Despite the use of Atlas, inconsistencies and unavailability of reliable financial information continued to pose challenges to evaluations.

77. It was recommended that UNDP strengthen its capacity in developing evaluable results frameworks as well as in monitoring and evaluating development results within an outcomes-based approach (Chile, Guyana, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Maldives, the regional programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Seychelles, Turkey, Uganda and Zambia). The evaluations also suggest that exit strategies and sustainability plans should be made an essential element of all projects. It was also pointed out that adequate planning of outcome evaluations will strengthen the practice of result-based management, facilitate performance monitoring and above all contribute to strategy formulation.

Procedural issues

78. Evaluations found that complex and/or inflexible procedures can hinder results if they do not respond to the needs of the national context (Guyana, Maldives, Uganda and Zambia,). The evaluation found that in crisis situations (for example, the post-conflict response in Uganda) the administrative procedures for procurement and approval of projects contributed to substantial delays and missed opportunities. Without compromising quality, transparency and accountability in procurement and project approvals, it was suggested that adequate measures should be taken to adapt UNDP administrative procedures to suit requirements at the implementation level.

III. Programme of work for the Evaluation Office for 2010-2011

79. The programme of work for the Evaluation Office is aligned with the UNDP strategic plan and approved by the Executive Board. Evaluations will be conducted to assess outcomes defined in the global, regional, country and programmes and the coverage will be selective and strategic. The 2010-2011 programme of work of Evaluation Office is as follows, and will be funded under the 2010-2011 biennial support budget approved by the Executive Board in January 2010:

Approved programme of work

(a) Fifteen assessments of development results;
(b) Evaluation of the UNDP contribution to decentralization and local governance;
(c) Evaluation of the contribution of UNDP to strengthening capacity development;
(d) Evaluation of the UNDP contribution to environmental management for poverty reduction: the nexus between poverty and environment;
(e) Evaluation of the UNDP contribution to prevention and recovery in countries affected by natural disasters;
(f) Evaluation of the UNDP regionalization process;
(g) Evaluation of UNDP effectiveness in facilitating the use of global funds to achieve development results;
(h) Evaluation of the role and contribution of UNDP support to strengthening electoral systems and processes;
(i) Evaluation of the UNDP contribution to poverty reduction;
(j) Evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategic plan.

Proposed programme of work

(a) Fifteen assessments of development results;
(b) Three evaluations of the regional cooperation frameworks in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean, respectively;
(c) Evaluation of gender mainstreaming;
(d) Evaluation of the UNDP contribution to conflict prevention and recovery.

Support the culture of evaluation:

(a) National evaluation capacity development – annual international workshops;
(b) Building evaluation capacity among UNDP staff and national partners through regional workshops and training on the revised evaluation handbook;
(c) Managing the Evaluation Resources Centre;
(d) Managing EvalNet and developing evaluation knowledge products; and
(e) Hosting and managing the secretariat of UNEG and contributing to the UNEG programme of work.